SUMMARY REPORT

THE PREVENTION INDEX 1992

A REPORT CARD ON THE NATION'S HEALTH

A PROJECT OF PREVENTION MAGAZINE

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A Report Card on the Nation's Health

A Project of PREVENTION Magazine

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Consumers' survey conducted for PREVENTION Magazine
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Fieldwork: November-December, 1991

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PREFACE

When we conducted the first Prevention Index survey in 1983, our primary motivation was curiosity. We wanted to know how many people were practicing some important health-promoting behaviors, like limiting fat, not smoking, and getting regular exercise.

The eight surveys since then have certainly satisfied our curiosity. Now, our major concern is to understand health behavior, and to learn how we can promote and sustain good health habits.

In some areas—like seat belt use—the past eight years have shown almost continuous progress. With other activities, such as frequent strenuous exercise, things have been relatively static. And in a few areas, such as efforts to get dietary fiber, we have seen declines.

These varied trends offer some useful lessons. Broad educational efforts, backed by legislation, can have a huge impact on behavior. But knowledge, by itself, may not be enough to effect lifestyle changes.

At PREVENTION Magazine, our goal is not only to provide people with the information they need to improve their health, but also to empower them to act. We hope this annual report card will be both a mark of progress and a catalyst for action.

Richard Porter
Publisher
PREVENTION Magazine

PART ONE

THE PREVENTION INDEX 1992

The Prevention Index score for 1992 is 66.5 out of a possible 100 points. This is the highest score recorded, topping the 66.2 achieved in both 1990 and 1991.

The 1992 score is exactly five points higher than the 61.5 we received in 1984, the first year of the Index. Over the past eight years, we have shown an 8.1 percent increase.

What does a score of 66.5 actually mean? The Index is a composite score, based on 21 major health-promoting behaviors. Each behavior is weighted for its health impact, based on the judgement of a panel of public health experts. The total values are then adjusted to a scale of 100. An Index score of 100 would mean that everyone was doing all 21 preventive acts; zero would mean that no one was doing any of them. (For details on computing the Index, see the Appendix.)

So this year's score means that the average American practices about two-thirds of the behavior items that are tracked by the survey.

The chart shows the 21 behaviors that comprise the Index, listed in order of decreasing importance as rated by the experts. The first column of numbers shows the percentage of adults who practice each behavior, followed by the experts' rating (on a scale of one to 10) of its importance for preventing disease and promoting health. The last column shows how much each behavior contributes to the Index score.

PLAYING IT SAFE

Although the total Index score rose only slightly, this year's survey data showed quite a lot of action, both good and bad.

Some positive trends continued this year, particularly in the area of safety. The two biggest gainers over the past eight years—smoke detectors and seat belts—continued to climb. The percentage of homes having smoke detectors rose to 88 percent, up from 86 percent last year and just 67 percent in 1984. And 69 percent of adults now say they always buckle up when in the front seat of a car, compared to 65 percent last year and just 19 percent who made that claim eight years ago.

The survey also showed a significant change—from 78 percent to 82 percent—in the percentage of adults who take steps to avoid accidents at home. Curiously, the biggest jumps came among better educated and higher income groups, who have traditionally trailed in this area.

Driving after drinking also continued its decline, falling to 18 percent of adults, down from 28 percent in 1984. This trend, along with increased seat belt use and new auto safety features, has helped drive the motor vehicle fatality rate to its lowest level ever.

There were two other hopeful signs as well. First, the number of adults who report getting regular, strenuous exercise, a figure which had been stalled for several years, rose to 37 percent. The growing body of evidence on the major health benefits of exercise may help promote this trend.

Second, smoking fell one point, from 26 to 25 percent. While this drop is not statistically significant, it puts smoking at the lowest point recorded. Yet one in four adults still practices this dangerous behavior.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The numbers also show, however, that America's struggle with a healthy diet continues.

In recent years, the nutritional spotlight has been on fat and cholesterol. As a result, since 1987 efforts to limit foods high in cholesterol have risen eight points (from 42 to 50 percent), and efforts to limit fat have climbed three points (from 54 to 57 percent).

But other important dietary factors seem to have suffered through neglect. Since 1987, efforts to limit salt or sodium have fallen six points (from 54 to 48 percent), efforts to limit sugar or sweet foods have slipped six points (from 49 to 43 percent), efforts to get enough dietary

THE PREVENTION INDEX, 1992

Health-Promoting Behavior	Adults Practicing %	Experts' Rating, Scale 1-10	Value Contributed to Index
1. Do Not Smoke	75	9.78	4.4
2. Avoid Smoking in Bed	92	9.24	5.1
3. Wear Seat Belt	69	9.16	3.8
4. Avoid Driving after Drinking	82	9.03	4.5
5. Smoke Detector in Home	88	8.53	4.5
6. Socialize Regularly	82	8.31	4.1
7. Frequent Strenuous Exercise	37	8.20	1.8
8. Drink Alcohol Moderately	90	8.15	4.4
9. Avoid Home Accidents	82	8.07	4.0
10. Limit Fat in Diet	57	7.82	2.7
11. Maintain Proper Weight	19	7.71	0.9
12. Obey Speed Limit	53	7.65	2.4
13. Annual Blood Pressure Test	85	7.62	3.9
14. Control Stress	71	7.58	3.2
15. Consume Fiber	56	7.41	2.5
16. Limit Cholesterol in Diet	50	7.15	2.2
17. Adequate Vitamins/Minerals	58	7.12	2.5
18. Annual Dental Examination	77	7.08	3.3
19. Limit Sodium in Diet	48	7.04	2.0
20. Limit Sugar in Diet	43	6.90	1.8
21. 7-8 Hours Sleep/Night	62	6.71	2.5
Prevention Index			**66.5**

fiber have dropped four points (from 60 to 56 percent), and concern about adequate vitamins and minerals in the diet is down one point (from 59 to 58 percent).

During this same period, the percentage of people within the recommended weight range for their age, sex and body build has also declined substantially—from 24 percent to just 19 percent. Currently, 63 percent of American adults are over their recommended weight range.

These findings suggest that while a majority of Americans want to have a healthier diet, many are unable to integrate good nutrition into a long-term lifestyle. They can control their diet--limit fat, or sugar, or salt, or lose weight—for a time, but they have great difficulty doing so on a permanent basis. There's no law that can make people eat better.

The good news is that we know, in general terms at least, what makes a good diet. The challenge before us, as individuals and as a nation, is to turn that knowledge into action.

Prevention Index Scores

1984	61.5
1985	63.2
1986	64.1
1987	65.2
1988	64.8
1989	65.4
1990	66.2
1991	66.2
1992	66.5

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

A major hope of the 1980's—that most Americans would adopt healthier lifestyles—may have been overly optimistic. In the past nine years the Prevention Index has shown that changes in many important risk behaviors are extremely difficult to achieve.

In the area of medical exams, for instance, there has been modest progress in the proportion of Americans reporting annual blood pressure tests (up three points since 1983) and annual cholesterol exams (up eight points since 1985). Women's exams are also showing only modest gains, with Pap smears every other year up six points and monthly breast self-examinations up 11 points. For each of these four exams, large numbers of people do not follow the appropriate preventive procedures.

Changes in other behaviors since 1983 have been even less substantial. Smoking among adults has dropped only five percentage points, from 30 to 25 percent. Regular strenuous exercise is up only three points, to 37 percent. The proportion of overweight adults has actually increased five points over the last nine years.

Attention to good nutrition habits has also changed relatively little during this time. While the percentage who "try a lot" not to eat too many high-cholesterol foods is up eight points, efforts to limit fat are up only two points, and attempts to get enough dietary fiber are actually down three points.

LAWS, NOT LIFESTYLES

The most dramatic areas of improvement have been brought about not by lifestyle changes, but by technology and legislation. Mandatory seat belt laws have helped to more than triple the proportion of Americans who report wearing a seat belt when in the front seat of a car, from 19 percent in 1983 to 69 percent in 1991. Also remarkable is the rise in the percentage of Americans who equip their homes with smoke detectors—up 21 points from 67 percent in 1983 to 88 percent in 1991.

The proportion of drivers who admit they drink and drive has also fallen sharply over the same period—from 30 percent to 21 percent. Experts have attributed this change to public education and tougher laws.

These results clearly show that laws can cause major changes in behavior. The use of new technology can also grow rapidly. But lifestyle changes requiring self-discipline are much more difficult to effect.

SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

Over the past decade, there has been a slow but steady decline in the proportion of Americans who smoke. In 1983, 30 percent said they smoked cigarettes. In 1991, a significantly lower 25 percent report practicing this behavior. The average decline over this period is slightly more than one-half of one percentage point each year.

ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUG USE

Nearly four in 10 Americans (39 percent) say they never drink alcoholic beverages. This figure represents a five-point increase over 1983's finding of 34 percent, and a two-point rise over last year's finding of 37 percent. The drop in alcohol consumption appears to have occurred particularly among moderate drinkers. In 1991, half of Americans say they drink, on average, one to three drinks on a day they drink, compared with a

higher 54 percent reporting the same level of alcohol consumption nine years ago.

After five years of steady improvement, the proportion of adults who report they never use illegal drugs has levelled off. In 1991, 95 percent of adults say they never use such drugs, a rise of four points over 1985's finding of 91 percent, but not significantly different from last year's high of 96 percent.

STRESS

The number of Americans who report that they experience stress at least once a week has risen seven percentage points over the last nine years, from 55 percent in 1983 to 62 percent in 1991. Along with this increasing experience of stress, however, people are more likely to take action to manage stress. In 1983, 59 percent said they took steps to control or reduce the stress in their lives. In 1991, this number has risen to 66 percent.

EXERCISE

The number of Americans who exercise regularly has remained stable over the last seven years. In 1991, as in 1985, just over three-quarters (77 percent) of adults say they get some regular exercise.

Participation in strenuous exercise may, however, have increased slightly over the same period. In 1991, 37 percent of adults exercise strenuously at least three days a week, up three points from both 1983's and 1990's findings. Younger, better educated and more affluent adults and men are more likely than others to get frequent strenuous exercise.

THE MOST DRAMATIC AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT HAVE BEEN BROUGHT ABOUT BY LEGISLATION, NOT BY LIFESTYLE CHANGES.

NUTRITION

This year's survey has good—and bad—news about nutrition concern. On one hand, there has been increased vigilance regarding fat and cholesterol intake. Although these two areas have not changed significantly over the past year (each up one point), avoiding high-cholesterol foods is up eight points and avoiding fatty foods is up two points since 1983.

On the other hand, in the last year there have been three-point declines in four nutrition categories: the number of Americans who "try a lot" to get enough fiber, avoid too much salt or sodium, avoid too much sugar or sweet food, and avoid caffeine in beverages.

WEIGHT CONTROL

There is no evidence that Americans are making progress in battling excess weight. Sixty-three percent of adults are over the recommended weight range for their build, and 33 percent are at least 10 percent over this range. In 1983, 58 percent were overweight, and 30 percent were 10 percent or more over the recommended range.

REGULAR MEDICAL EXAMS

Eighty-five percent of adults report having their blood pressure checked at least once a year. This represents only a marginal gain of three points over 1983's finding of 82 percent. Over half of adults (56 percent) report having a cholesterol test done at least annually. This number is a significant improvement over 1985's finding of 48 percent, but is virtually unchanged since 1990.

The proportion of people having a dental check-up at least once a year continues to rise. In 1991, 77 percent of adults report having this exam annually, up from 75 percent last year and 71 percent in 1983.

Women show continued progress in having regular Pap smear tests at least every two years and doing monthly breast self-examinations. Just over eight in 10 adult women (81 percent) say they have a Pap smear test for cancer at least every two years. Forty-eight percent of women say they examine their breasts to detect any possible cancer at least once a month.

In a new question in this year's survey, nearly half (47 percent) of women report having a mammogram for breast cancer at least every two years. Because an annual mammogram is strongly recommended for older women, it is not surprising that higher proportions of

women age 40 or more (67 percent) have a mammogram at least every two years.

HOME SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Each of this year's home safety measures—taking precautions to avoid accidents in the home, smoke detector usage, and smoking in bed—have registered improvements both in the last year and since 1983.

The most striking change has been in the use of a smoke detector. Nearly nine in 10 American homes (88 percent) now have smoke detectors, up two percentage points since last year, but up 21 percentage points since 1983.

The proportion of adults saying they take special steps or precautions to avoid accidents in and around their homes has risen 10 points, from 72 percent in 1983 to 82 percent in 1991. And in the area of smoking in bed—the main cause of domestic fires—just eight percent of adults say someone in their household practices this unsafe habit.

AUTOMOBILE SAFETY

The percentage of people who say they always wear a seat belt when in the front seat of a car continues to climb. Sixty-nine percent of Americans say they wear seat belts all the time, up from 65 percent in 1990. Far more spectacular is the rise of 50 percentage points from the first measure of 19 percent taken in 1983.

While Americans have made sharp gains in seat belt usage, attention to obeying the speed limit has decreased over the past nine years. In 1991, 48 percent of drivers say they drive at or below the speed limit all the time, an eight percentage point drop from 1983's finding of 56 percent. And while the number of adults who drink and drive has remained constant since last year at 21 percent, this number represents a fall of nine points since 1983.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Eighty-seven percent of adult Americans report that they currently have health insurance; 13 percent say they do not. Those most in need of health insurance—the least advantaged and those who pay the least attention to good health habits—are also the least likely to be insured.

Most people are very responsive to the need for health insurance for all groups in society. Nearly three-fourths (74 percent) support the idea of "health insurance for all Americans, funded by tax dollars." Nineteen percent oppose this type of universal coverage, and seven percent aren't sure. While support for universal coverage is widespread among all demographic groups, it is strongest among those most likely to benefit: the uninsured, the underprivileged, and individuals with higher health risks.

For those who have access to medical care, preventive care from a doctor is a highly recommended way of avoiding health problems before they occur. About two-fifths (42 percent) of adults said they had visited a doctor for a preventive service in the last year, apart from when they were sick. Twice as many insured (46 percent) as uninsured (23 percent) Americans report having received such preventive care. Older, wealthier, and highly educated adults are more likely to have sought preventive care from a doctor.

MEDICINE USE AND LABEL READING

Eighty-two percent of American adults say that in the past year they have taken over-the-counter medications, and 85 percent say they have taken prescription drugs.

With both prescription and non-prescription medicines, nine out of 10 users say they read the labels before using the medicine. However, 10 percent of those who read labels on over-the-counter medications, and 11 percent of those who read prescription drug labels, say they usually don't understand the information given.

This is the ninth annual survey of the American public commissioned by PREVENTION Magazine, a publication of Rodale Press, as part of an ongoing project known as the Prevention Index. Each year the Prevention Index measures the efforts Americans are making to promote and enhance good health and longevity and to safeguard themselves from accidents and disease.

In order to examine the health behavior of Americans, Louis Harris and Associates interviewed 1,256 randomly selected adults across the country by telephone, from November 20, 1991 through December 5, 1991. The interviews focused on several risk factors and health habits which are believed to influence long-term health. In each of the nine annual surveys, 24 key factors have been highlighted, providing the Prevention Index with powerful trend data and analysis.

In addition to tracking key trends, the 1991 survey examines the issues of health insurance, and medicine use and label reading. Information on survey methodology is included as part of the appendix to this report.

SURVEY ACCURACY

Surveys are subject to several sources of error. The most important are:

- **NONRESPONSE**, if those who are interviewed differ from those who are not interviewed.
- **RANDOM OR SAMPLING ERROR**, which may in theory be substantial, even on very large surveys.
- **QUESTION WORDING,** particularly where the survey is measuring an attitude or a future intention and not a "fact." Several equally good questions may yield different (and equally valid) responses. In addition, question sequence can influence the responses, particularly to attitude questions.

Despite these possible sources of error, the results presented in this report do reflect the most reliable information available. And the 1991 survey, along with its earlier counterparts, provides one of the most comprehensive time-series assessments of health and safety factors ever obtained from national cross sections of Americans.

A NOTE ON READING THE TABLES

An asterisk (*) on a table signifies a value of less than one-half percent (0.5 percent). A dash (-) represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100 percent because of computer rounding, multiple answers from respondents, or the elimination of "no answers."

PUBLIC RELEASE OF SURVEY FINDINGS

All Louis Harris and Associates surveys are designed to adhere to the code of standards of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls (NCPP). Because data from the survey will be released to the public, any release must stipulate that the complete report is available.

PROJECT RESPONSIBILITY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Louis Harris and Associates would like to thank PREVENTION Magazine, Richard Porter, PREVENTION's publisher, and Tom Dybdahl, who manages the project for PREVENTION, for their continued support.

Louis Harris and Associates is responsible for final determination of the topics, question wordings, collection of the actual data, and analysis and interpretation of the report.

The Harris team responsible for the design and analysis of the questionnaire was Humphrey Taylor, President; Robert Leitman, Senior Vice President; and Susan Barnett, Research Associate.

PART TWO

PREVENTION IN AMERICA 9:

STEPS PEOPLE TAKE— OR FAIL TO TAKE— FOR BETTER HEALTH

SUMMARY

EXERCISE AND WEIGHT CONTROL

AMERICANS DO NOT SEEM TO BE MAKING ANY PROGRESS IN BATTLING EXCESS WEIGHT.

EXERCISE

The number of Americans who exercise regularly has remained stable over the last seven years. In 1991, as in 1985, slightly over three-quarters (77 percent) of adults say they get some regular exercise. Participation in strenuous exercise, however, has increased slightly over the same period. In 1991, 37 percent of adults report strenuous exercise at least three days a week, up three points from 1983's finding of 34 percent. (See Table 1-1.)

People most likely to get frequent strenuous exercise include men (45 percent), younger adults (49 percent of those aged 18 to 29), college graduates (44 percent) and those with more than $50,000 in annual household income (43 percent). Americans who say they are in excellent health are far more likely to get frequent strenuous workouts (46 percent vs. 29 percent of those in fair or poor health). These patterns have persisted since 1985. (See Table 1-2.)

WEIGHT CONTROL

Americans do not seem to be making any progress in battling excess weight. Sixty-three percent of adults are over the recommended weight range for their build, and 33 percent are at least 10 percent over this range. In 1983, 58 percent of adults were over their recommended weight range, while 30 percent were at least 10 percent over this range.

The number of adults within the recommended weight range has fallen four points since 1983's pioneer Index, from 23 percent to 19 percent. During this time, the proportion of

TABLE 1-1

FREQUENCY OF STRENUOUS EXERCISE

	1983 Survey	1985 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey	1990 Survey	1991 Survey
Base	1254	1256	1250	1250	1250	1254	1256
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	24	21	24	19	24	21	21
Less than 1 day a month	6	8	6	6	6	7	6
1 to 3 days a month	9	13	10	11	11	14	12
1 day a week	13	16	14	13	12	12	11
2 days a week	12	11	11	13	10	12	12
3 days a week	13	13	15	15	15	14	17
4 to 5 days week	9 } 34	10 } 31	11 } 35	12 } 36	10 } 35	10 } 34	9 } 37
6 to 7 days a week	12	8	9	9	10	10	11

PEOPLE WHO EXERCISE STRENUOUSLY THREE OR MORE DAYS PER WEEK

	Base		Exercise Strenuously Three Times Per Week or More
Total	**1256**	**%**	**37**
REGION			
East	303	%	38
South	391	%	39
Midwest	309	%	33
West	253	%	41
SEX			
Male	644	%	45
Female	612	%	31
AGE			
18-29 years	309	%	49
30-39 years	304	%	40
40-49 years	220	%	38
50-64 years	214	%	28
65 and over	201	%	26
EDUCATION			
Not high school graduate	147	%	36
High school graduate	456	%	36
Some college	318	%	34
Four-year college graduate	334	%	44
HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
$7,500 or less	101	%	34
$7,501-$15,000	118	%	32
$15,001-$25,000	230	%	35
$25,001-$35,000	214	%	40
$35,001-$50,000	220	%	38
$50,001 and over	262	%	43
SELF-DESCRIBED HEALTH STATUS			
Excellent	303	%	46
Very good or good	785	%	36
Fair or poor	163	%	29

underweight Americans has remained virtually unchanged (Table 1-3).

More affluent and better educated adults are most apt to be successful in keeping their weight under control, as are those who describe their health as excellent and those who practice a higher number of preventive habits.

Table 14

ADULTS WHO ARE OVERWEIGHT, WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED WEIGHT RANGE, AND UNDERWEIGHT*

Base: Age 25 and older and classifiable

Base	1983 Survey 995 %	1985 Survey 1061 %	1987 Survey 1008 %	1988 Survey 1031 %	1989 Survey 1015 %	1990 Survey 1042 %	1991 Survey 988 %
OVERWEIGHT							
Total	58	62	59	64	61	64	63
30% or more above range	6	8	7	8	8	7	7
20-29.9% above range	9	7	8	10	9	9	8
10-19.9% above range	15	14	17	18	17	20	18
5-9.9% above range	13	16	14	15	13	14	14
Up to 4.9% above range	16	16	13	14	13	15	16
Within Recommended Range	23	21	24	21	24	22	19
UNDERWEIGHT							
Total	19	17	16	15	15	14	18
Up to 4.9% below range	9	9	8	8	8	8	10
5-9.9% below range	6	4	5	5	5	4	5
10% or more below range	4	4	3	2	3	2	3

*Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data.Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables were used for the classification.Bases vary slightly across the years: 995 (1983), 1061 (1985), 1008 (1987), 1031 (1988), 1015 (1989), 1042 (1990), 988 (1991).

NUTRITION

Only one in four Americans pays close attention to good eating habits. This group says they "try a lot" to follow at least eight of 11 key diet and nutrition principles. A narrow majority (52 percent) say they try a lot to practice between three and seven of these behaviors, while the remaining fourth (23 percent) follow fewer than three. These measures have changed little since last year. (See Table 2-2.)

A majority of Americans make particular efforts to eat vegetables in the cabbage family (59 percent), get enough vitamins and minerals in foods or in supplements (58 percent), not eat too much fat (57 percent) and eat enough fiber from whole grains, cereals, fruits and vegetables (56 percent).

Table 2-1

TRENDS IN SOME KEY ASPECTS OF DIET AND NUTRITION

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	1990 Survey 1254 %	1991 Survey 1256 %	Change Since 1983
Get enough vitamins and minerals in foods or in supplements	63	63	59	58	59	58	-5
Eat enough fiber from whole grains, cereals, fruits, and vegetables	59	59	60	60	59	56	-3
Avoid eating too much fat	55	56	54	58	56	57	+2
Avoid eating too much salt or sodium	53	54	54	52	51	48	-5
Avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	51	50	49	46	46	43	-8
Get enough calcium in food or in supplements	50	57	54	55	50	48	-2
Avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods, such as eggs, dairy products, and fatty meats	42	42	42	50	49	50	+8
Avoid caffeine in beverages such as coffee, tea, and certain soda pop	X	37	34	33	32	29	-5*
Avoid foods that contain additives, such as preservatives, colorings, and artificial flavorings	X	33	36	33	33	33	-4*
Eat fish twice a week	X	34	33	28	27	27	-7**
Eat vegetables in the cabbage family, such as cabbage, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower	X	62	59	61	59	59	-3**

X Not asked.
* Change since 1984.
** Change since 1985.

ADULTS WHO EXERCISE STRENUOUSLY ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO BE CAREFUL EATERS THAN THOSE WHO ARE SEDENTARY.

Nearly half of adults say they "try a lot" to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods (50 percent), get enough calcium in foods or in supplements (48 percent), avoid eating too much salt or sodium (48 percent), and avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food (43 percent).

The weakest areas of Americans' nutritional efforts (those followed faithfully by one-third or less) are avoiding foods with additives (33 percent), avoiding caffeine (29 percent), and eating fish twice a week (27 percent). (See Table 2-1.)

TRENDS IN EATING

These findings reinforce the fact that many areas of nutrition are receiving decreasing emphasis, while the main focus remains on fat and cholesterol. Since 1983, efforts to limit high-cholesterol foods have climbed eight percentage points, while efforts to limit high-fat foods have risen two points.

Meanwhile, the number of people trying to limit sugar or salt, trying to get enough vitamins and minerals, and trying to consume dietary fiber has decreased considerably.

NUTRITION AND EXERCISE

Most health experts agree that a balanced diet and regular exercise are the keys to overall good health and weight control. The survey shows that adults who exercise strenuously are much more likely to be careful eaters than those who are sedentary. Fully one-third (34 percent) of Americans who exercise strenuously three or more times a week follow at least eight of the primary nutrition behavior items, compared to only half this proportion (18 percent) of those who do not exercise regularly. (See Table 2-2.)

Only 13 percent of Americans practice a high number of good nutrition habits and exercise strenuously. An equal number score highly on nutrition behavior alone. Twice this proportion (25 percent) exercise strenuously without paying close attention to nutrition. This leaves nearly half (49 percent) of Americans who closely adhere to neither good nutrition nor good exercise habits.

Demographic groups who follow each of these behavioral paths differ in several respects. While women and older Americans are more likely to follow many of the nutritional recommendations closely and not exercise strenuously, men and younger Americans are more likely to exercise rigorously without giving careful thought to good nutrition habits.

Table 2-2

NUTRITION INDEX BY EXERCISE BEHAVIOR

	Total	Those Who Exercise Strenuously Three or More Times Per Week	Those Who Never Exercise Strenuously
Base	1256	470	253
	%	%	%
NUTRITION INDEX*			
High	25	34	18
Medium	52	49	49
Low	23	17	33

*Nutrition index is based on the total number of nutrition behavior items in question 5 which respondents say they "try a lot" to do. Those saying "try a lot" on 8, 9, 10 or 11 items are "high" on the index; those saying "try a lot" on 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 items are "medium"; those saying "try a lot" on 0, 1, or 2 items are "low".

REGULAR MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

BLOOD PRESSURE READING

Eighty-five percent of Americans report getting their blood pressure checked at least once a year. This figure represents only a marginal gain of three percentage points over 1983's finding of 82 percent. A more sizeable increase has occurred among those having this reading done more often than once a year, up from 52 percent in 1983 to 57 percent in 1991. (See Table 3-1.)

Older (92 percent of those aged 65+) and wealthier people (92 percent of those with household income over $50,000 annually) are more likely than others to have a blood pressure

Table 3-1

TRENDS IN MEDICAL EXAMS AND TESTS

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %		1985 Survey 1250 %		1987 Survey 1250 %		1988 Survey 1250 %		1990 Survey 1254 %		1991 Survey 1256 %		Change
BLOOD PRESSURE SCREEN													Since 1983
More often than once a year	52		59		56		57		56		57		
Once a year	30	82	28	87	28	84	26	83	29	85	28	85	+3
Every two years	6		5		6		6		4		4		
Every three or four years	2		3		3		1		2		2		
Every five years or less often	3		3		2		3		3		2		
Never	5		2		3		5		5		4		
Not sure	2		1		2		3		2		3		
CHOLESTEROL TEST													Since 1985
More often than once a year	X		20		19		21		22		21		
Once a year	X		28	48	26	45	28	49	33	55	34	56	+8
Every two years	X		7		7		6		8		7		
Every three or four years	X		4		4		4		3		4		
Every five years or less often	X		6		5		5		5		4		
Never	X		29		34		32		26		25		
Not sure	X		5		4		4		3		4		
DENTAL EXAM													Since 1983
More often than once a year	44		46		50		47		51		51		
Once a year	27	71	28	74	25	75	24	71	25	75	26	77	+6
Every two years	8		7		6		8		7		5		
Every three or four years	4		3		4		4		2		2		
Every five years or less often	11		4		4		4		4		5		
Never	11		11		10		11		10		9		
Not sure	3		1		1		2		1		1		

X Not asked.

TRENDS IN TESTS AND SELF-EXAMS FOR WOMEN

Base: Women only

	1983 Survey		1985 Survey		1987 Survey		1988 Survey		1989 Survey		1990 Survey		1991 Survey	
Base	646		640		634		652		655		619		612	
%	%		%		%		%		%		%		%	
PAP SMEAR														
More often than once a year	18	75	15	78	17	75	15	79	15	76	14	80	15	81
Once a year	49		54		51		57		55		59		61	
Every two years	8		9		7		7		6		8		6	
Every three years	4		3		4		3		6		4		3	
Every four or five years	3		3		3		3		4		3		3	
Every six years or less often	2		3		3		3		3		2		3	
Never	13		12		10		9		10		9		8	
Not applicable (vol.)	1		1		2		1		1		1		1	
Not sure	2		1		2		2		1		1		1	
BREAST SELF-EXAM													–	
At least once a month	37		48		42		51		44		47		48	
Several times a year	30		30		29		24		24		23		27	
Once a year	9		8		9		7		9		10		11	
Less than once a year	4		3		4		3		4		4		2	
Never	15		9		13		12		15		14		10	
I never do it — doctor does it (vol.)	2		1		2		1		3		2		1	
Not applicable (vol.)	*		–		1		*		*		1		–	
Not sure	1		1		1		*		*		*		*	

*Less than 0.5%.

reading at least yearly. Other groups more likely to have this reading done annually include women (90 percent), Southerners (89 percent), and Easterners (88 percent). Insured Americans (88 percent) are far more likely than those without health insurance (68 percent) to have this test done at least once a year. (See Table 3-3.)

CHOLESTEROL TESTING

Over half of adults (56 percent) report having a cholesterol test done at least once a year. This proportion is a significant improvement over 1985's finding of 48 percent. (See Table 3-1.)

As with annual blood pressure tests, older and wealthier Americans, women, and individuals with health insurance are more likely than others to have their cholesterol checked annually.

DENTAL CHECK-UPS

The proportion of Americans having a dental check-up at least once a year continues to rise. In 1991, 77 percent of adults report having this exam annually—up two percentage points from 1990 and up six percentage points from 1983. (See Table 3-1.)

People with a higher socioeconomic profile are more likely to have at least annual dental check-ups. Ninety-one percent of adults in households with incomes over $50,000 per year, and 87 percent of those with at least some college education visit their dentist annually, compared to 53 percent of those without a high school degree and 63 percent of those with annual incomes of $7,500 or less. Just as with blood pressure and cholesterol tests, a higher proportion of adults with health insurance (79 percent) than those without coverage (62 percent) have at least annual dental check-ups. (See Table 3-3.)

Americans who have regular blood

MEDICAL EXAMS OR TESTS BY HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

	Total	Have Health Insurance	Do Not Have Health Insurance
Base	**1256**	**1112**	**143**
	%	%	%
At least annual blood pressure reading	85	88	68
At least annual cholesterol test	56	59	38
At least annual dental check-up	77	79	62
Base (Women only)	**612**	**545**	**66**
	%	%	%
Pap smear at least every one or two years	81	83	72
Monthly breast self-exam	48	46	61
Mammogram at least every two years	47	49	32

pressure and cholesterol tests tend to be older, but younger Americans are likeliest to have a dental check-up at least annually. Eighty-five percent of adults under 40 years of age say they see their dentist yearly, compared with only 60 percent of those aged 65 and over.

PAP SMEAR, BREAST SELF-EXAM, AND MAMMOGRAPHY

Just over eight in 10 adult women (81 percent) say they have a Pap smear test for cancer at least every two years. This figure represents an increase of six percentage points over 1983, and one point over 1990. (See Table 3-2.)

Younger (86 percent of women aged 18 to 39), better educated (86 percent of women with some college education), wealthier women (92 percent of those with annual household income of $50,000+), and those in excellent health (87 percent) are most likely to have Pap smears at least every two years. More than eight in 10 (83 percent) insured women, but a lower 72 percent of uninsured women, have this important test done at least every two years. (See Table 3-3.)

Since 1983, American women have also shown progress in the area of breast self-examination. Now, 48 percent of adult women say they examine their breasts to detect any possible cancer at least once a month. Nine years ago, only 37 percent of women examined their breasts monthly. Although the 1991 finding is only one percentage point above 1990's figure of 47 percent, a more encouraging sign is that the proportion of women who say they *never* do this exam has fallen four points since last year, from 14 percent to 10 percent.

In contrast to the pattern for frequent Pap smear tests, women in lower socioeconomic brackets and those without health insurance are more likely to examine their breasts at least monthly. About six in 10 women with household income of $7,500 or less annually (62 percent), those who lack a high school education (58 percent), and those who have no health insurance coverage (61 percent) say they perform this exam monthly.

In a new question this year, 47 percent of American women report having a mammogram for breast cancer at least every two years. Because an annual mammogram is strongly recommended for women over the age of 50, large differences by age group are not surprising. Fully two-thirds (67 percent) of women aged 40+ say they have a mammogram at least every two years, compared with only 30 percent of women aged 30 to 39, and 17 percent of those aged 18 to 29.

While higher wealth and education levels are clearly associated with a higher likelihood of having a regular Pap smear and a lower likelihood of breast self-examinations, there are no significant differences by household income and education relating to the frequency of having mammograms. But as with Pap smear tests, insured women (49 percent) are more likely than those without coverage (32 percent) to have this test done at least every other year. (See Table 3-3.)

STRESS

Nearly one in five Americans (18 percent) reports feeling under great stress almost every day, two points above 1983's finding of 16 percent. Fourteen percent say they feel great stress several days a week, and 30 percent say they feel stress once or twice a week.

At the low end, the proportion reporting that they feel only a minimal level of stress—less often than once a week—has risen four points in just the last year, from 24 percent to 28 percent.

Most dramatically, the percentage of adults who experience stress at least once a week has risen seven percentage points over the past nine years, from 55 percent in 1983 to 62 percent in 1991. In a similar fashion, the proportion who say they never feel great stress has fallen sharply, from 16 percent in 1983 to nine percent in 1991. (See Table 4-1.)

In 1991, the only significant differences among demographic groups regarding stress levels are for sex and age. More women than men, by a 37 percent to 27 percent margin, say they experience great stress at least

TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF STRESS

	1983 Survey	1985 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey	1990 Survey	1991 Survey
Base	1254	1250	1250	1250	1250	1254	1256
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
FREQUENCY OF STRESS							
Almost every day	16	14	17	18	15	16	18
Several days a week	12	13	15	15	15	16	14
Once or twice a week	27	33	30	30	30	32	30
Less often than once a week	29	30	27	27	26	24	28
Never	16	10	10	9	12	10	9
Not sure	1	1	1	1	1	1	*
STEPS TO CONTROL STRESS							
Yes, take steps to control	59	69	68	69	65	65	66
No, don't take steps	38	31	30	30	34	34	33
Not sure	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
SLEEP							
6 hours or less	25	26	27	28	25	28	26
7-8 hours	64	64	61	62	64	61	62
9 hours or more	10	9	11	11	11	9	11
Not sure	1	*	1	1	*	1	1
SOCIALIZING WITH OTHERS							
Once a week or more	84	85	83	84	85	84	82
Less than once a week	16	15	17	16	14	15	17
Not sure	*	*	1	1	*	*	1

*Less than 0.5%.

MORE WOMEN THAN MEN SAY THEY EXPERIENCE GREAT STRESS AT LEAST SEVERAL DAYS A WEEK.

several days a week. Younger Americans aged 30 to 39 (39 percent) and 18 to 29 (36 percent) are more likely than older Americans to feel high levels of stress. Only 21 percent of those over age 65 report great stress several days a week.

CONTROLLING STRESS

While the number of Americans experiencing great stress at least once a week has risen seven points since 1983, there has been a parallel jump in the proportion reporting that they are trying to manage this stress. In 1983, 59 percent said they took steps to control or reduce the stress in their lives. In 1991, 66 percent made that claim.

The use of two specific ways of controlling stress—getting adequate sleep and socializing with others—has remained virtually constant over this same period. Sixty-two percent of Americans now report getting the recommended seven or eight hours of sleep per night, compared to 64 percent in 1983. Similarly, just over eight in 10 (82 percent) say they socialize with others at least once a week, compared to 84 percent in 1983. (See Table 4-1.)

College graduates (69 percent), Americans aged 50 to 64 (70 percent), and whites (65 percent) are most likely to report getting seven or eight hours of sleep on a regular basis. The only notable difference among demographic groups for those who socialize weekly, however, is by age. The youngest and oldest groups of adults (those aged 18 to 29 and 65+) are most likely to socialize regularly, while Americans in their most productive years (those aged 30 to 64) are least likely to do so.

SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

Since the first PREVENTION survey in 1983, there has been a slow but steady decline in the number of Americans who smoke cigarettes. In 1983, 30 percent said they smoked. In 1991, 25 percent report this habit.

In contrast to this gradual nine-year fall, however, is the dramatic drop of 18 percentage points since 1974, when 43 percent of Americans smoked cigarettes. (See Table 5-1.)

In a pattern which has persisted over the years, the groups most likely to be nonsmokers are those aged 65 or older (83 percent), those who have a college degree (84 percent), and those with annual household incomes in excess of $50,000 (82 percent).

And as in previous surveys, there is a strong correlation between smoking and self-reported health status. Those who say they are in "excellent" health are far more likely to be nonsmokers (80 percent) than those who say their health is only fair or poor (66 percent). But men are just as likely as women to be nonsmokers.

Overall, three in 10 people report using some form of tobacco. Five percent of adults who don't smoke cigarettes say they smoke a cigar or a pipe or use chewing tobacco.

SMOKING AND HEALTH HABITS

In addition to having a lower socioeconomic status, cigarette smokers are more likely than nonsmokers to practice a number of high-risk behaviors and generally ignore good preventive health practices.

Smokers are less likely than nonsmokers to exercise strenuously at least three times a week, and to drink moderately or not at all. They are more likely to be underweight (nicotine often acts as an appetite suppressant), to report feeling under stress frequently, and are less likely to get the recommended seven or eight hours of sleep per night. They also have a greater tendency to neglect regular dental check-ups.

Smokers pay less attention than nonsmokers to common diet and nutrition advice. They are less likely to eat enough fiber, to avoid eating too much fat, and to avoid eating too much salt or sodium.

Other high-risk behaviors, such as illegal drug use, having someone in the household who smokes in bed, and not wearing a seat belt when in the front seat of a car are also more common among smokers than among nonsmokers. (See Table 5-2.)

Table 5-1

TRENDS IN SMOKING

Base	1974 Survey 1407 %	1975 Survey 1556 %	1978 Survey 1347 %	1983 Survey 1252 %	1984 Survey 1252 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1986 Survey 1250 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	1990 Survey 1254 %	1991 Survey 1256 %
Smoke now	43	43	39	30	28	30	27	28	26	28	26	25
Do not smoke	57	57	61	70	72	70	72	72	74	71	74	75

Note: Because of population growth, the change in the *absolute numbers* of smoking adults can, of course, be less than the change in the *percentage* of smoking adults.

Sources for 1974, 1975 and 1978 data are three national surveys of adults aged 18 and older conducted by Louis Harris and Associates.

Table 5-2

TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS: SMOKERS VS. NONSMOKERS

	1991 Survey	1991 Smokers	1991 Nonsmokers
Base	**1256**	**321**	**934**
	%	%	%
NONSMOKING AND RESTRICTED USE OF ALCOHOL			
Do not smoke cigarettes	75	–	100
Drink alcohol moderately	50	50	50
(Drink alcohol moderately or do not drink at all)	88	78	92 –
EXERCISE AND WEIGHT CONTROL			
Get strenuous exercise three or more days a week	37	33	39
Are within the weight range recommended for their height, build, and sex*	19	18	19
Are not overweight*	37	43	35
Are underweight	18	24	16
DIET AND NUTRITION			
Try a lot to get enough vitamins and minerals	58	56	58
Try a lot to eat enough fiber	56	50	58
Try a lot to avoid eating too much fat	57	50	59
Try a lot to avoid eating too much salt or sodium	48	36	52
Try a lot to avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	43	38	44
Try a lot to get enough calcium	48	46	49
Try a lot to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods	50	46	51
Try a lot to avoid caffeine in beverages	29	19	32
CONTROL OF STRESS			
Feel under great stress frequently	32	37	30
Socialize with friends or relatives once a week or more	82	81	83
Get seven or eight hours sleep most nights	62	59	64
Take specific steps to control or reduce stress	66	67	66
PERIODIC EXAMINATIONS AND TESTS			
Have a blood pressure reading at least once a year	85	83	86
Have a dental check-up at least once a year	77	70	79
Have a blood test for cholesterol	56	53	57
SAFETY PRECAUTIONS			
Say that no one in their home smokes in bed	87	81	90
Say they take specific steps to avoid accidents in and around the home	82	81	82
Say they have a smoke detector in their home	88	87	89
Drivers who say they drive at or below the speed limit all the time**	48	52	47
Drivers who say they either never drive after drinking or don't drink at all**	79	79	79
Say they wear seat belts all the time when in the front seat of a car	69	61	72
Never tried illegal drugs, such as marijuana, speed and downers	95	89	97

*Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data.Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables were used for the classification. Bases vary slightly across the years: 995 (1983), 1047 (1984), 1061 (1985), 1022 (1986), 1008 (1987), 1031 (1988), 1015 (1989), 1042 (1990), 988 (1991).

**Base: Drivers only (1146).

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

ALCOHOL USE

Thirty-nine percent of Americans say they never consume alcoholic beverages. This represents a five-point increase over 1983's finding of 34 percent, and a two-point rise over last year's finding of 37 percent.

The drop in alcohol consumption has occurred primarily among moderate drinkers. Half of American adults say they drink, on average, one to three drinks on a day they drink alcohol, compared with 54 percent reporting that level of consumption nine years ago. The proportion of heavy drinkers—those who drink at least four drinks on a day they consume alcohol—has remained at a

Table 6-1

TRENDS IN USE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %		1985 Survey 1256 %		1987 Survey 1250 %		1989 Survey 1250 %		1990 Survey 1254 %		1991 Survey 1256 %	
FREQUENCY OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION												
Never	34		33		36		39		37		39	
Less than 1 day a month	16		15		13		16		13		16	
1 to 3 days a month	16		20		19		16		20		20	
1 to 2 days a week	19	65	19	66	21	64	18	60	18	63	15	61
3 to 4 days a week	7		6		5		5		6		5	
5 to 6 days a week	2		2		1		2		2		1	
Daily/7 days a week	6		4		5		5		5		4	
Not sure	*		*		*		*		*		*	
QUANTITY OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION												
1 drink	21		22		21		23		20		21	
2 drinks	22	54	23	55	20	50	18	50	20	51	20	50
3 drinks	10		10		9		9		11		9	
4 drinks	5		4		6		4		4		4	
5 or more drinks	6		7		8		5		7		7	
Not sure	1		*		*		1		*		*	
ILLEGAL DRUG USE												
Frequently	X		2		*		1		1		1	
Sometimes	X		7		1		1		1		1	
Only occasionally**	X		X		4		4		2		3	
Never	X		91		94		94		96		95	
Not sure	X		*		–		–		–		–	

X Not asked.
*Less than 0.5%.
**The "only occasionally" category has been added since 1987.

Table 6-2

PEOPLE WHO RESTRICT THEIR ALCOHOL USE

		Base		Do Not Drink Alcohol	Drinkers Who Drink Alcohol Moderately*
Total		**1256**	**%**	**39**	**81**
REGION	East	303	%	30	83
	South	391	%	48	83
	Midwest	309	%	38	84
	West	253	%	35	74
URBANISM	Central city	415	%	36	78
	Rest of metropolitan area	563	%	34	82
	Outside metropolitan area	278	%	52	85
SEX	Male	644	%	30	73
	Female	612	%	47	91
RACE	White	1071	%	36	82
	Black	94	%	44	89
	Hispanic	57	%	49	64
AGE	18-29 years	309	%	28	70
	30-39 years	304	%	32	80
	40-49 years	220	%	37	87
	50-64 years	214	%	45	90
	65 and over	201	%	60	92
EDUCATION	Not high school graduate	147	%	56	62
	High school graduate	456	%	43	79
	Some college	318	%	37	82
	Four-year college graduate	334	%	25	89
HOUSEHOLD INCOME	$7,500 or less	101	%	64	73
	$7,501-$15,000	118	%	43	81
	$15,001-$25,000	230	%	39	74
	$25,001-$35,000	214	%	33	85
	$35,001-$50,000	220	%	35	83
	$50,001 and over	262	%	26	84
SELF-DESCRIBED HEALTH STATUS	Excellent	303	%	37	78
	Very good or good	785	%	36	83
	Fair or poor	163	%	52	78
STRESS CONTROL	Take steps to control stress	832	%	39	84
	Do not take steps	417	%	37	75
FEELING OF STRESS	Feel stress at least several days a week	403	%	34	81
	Feel stress less often	847	%	41	81

*Based on the 61% of all adults who sometimes drink; this proportion is not necessarily constant across subgroups. "Moderate" drinking is defined here as 3 or fewer drinks on a day in which alcohol is consumed.

NONDRINKERS ARE FAR MORE LIKELY THAN DRINKERS TO BE OLDER, LESS EDUCATED, AND LESS AFFLUENT.

consistent 11 percent over the same period. (See Table 6-1.)

Nondrinkers are far more likely than drinkers to be older, less educated, and less affluent. A majority of Americans with annual household incomes of $7,500 or less (64 percent), those without a high school degree (56 percent), and those aged 65 and over (60 percent) say they never drink alcohol. But only about one-quarter of those with yearly household incomes over $50,000 (26 percent), college graduates (25 percent), and those aged 18 to 29 (28 percent) practice abstinence.

Southerners (48 percent), residents of rural areas (52 percent), and women (47 percent) are more likely than residents of the East (30 percent), West (35 percent), Midwest (38 percent), and of urban (36 percent) and suburban areas (34 percent), and men (30 percent) to be nondrinkers. Also, over half of those in fair or poor health say they are nondrinkers, compared with just over one-third of adults who rate their health more highly.

The groups most likely to be moderate drinkers—those who drink one to three drinks on a day they consume alcohol—are better educated (89 percent of college graduates) and wealthier (84 percent of people with annual household incomes over $25,000). Consistent with the pattern established among nondrinkers, however, is the greater tendency to drink moderately among women (91 percent) than among men (73 percent). (See Table 6-2.)

DRUG USE

After five years of improvement, the proportion of Americans who report they "never use any recreational* drugs such as marijuana, speed, and downers" has not changed significantly. Ninety-five percent of adults say they never use such drugs, a rise of four points over 1985's finding of 91 percent, and not significantly different from last year's high of 96 percent. (See Table 6-1.)

This change in illegal drug use, although slight, confirms the findings of a study done by the National Institute on Drug Abuse from hospital reports. The study says that use of cocaine and heroin is increasing, and increases are most common in inner cities and among those aged 35 years and older.

As noted in previous PREVENTION studies, drug use is more prevalent among younger adults. Ninety-eight percent of Americans who are at least 40 years of age say they never use illegal drugs, compared to 91 percent of those aged 18 to 29.

This year's findings also represent a reverse in the recent trend of young adults away from illegal drugs. In 1990, 95 percent of Americans aged 18 to 29 reported never using such drugs; in 1991, this proportion fell to 91 percent. This figure is, however, 12 points higher than the 79 percent finding in 1984.

RELATING ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUG USE

Previous surveys have noted that alcohol and cigarette use are clearly related. Eighty percent of nondrinkers do not smoke, compared to 71 percent of drinkers. Similarly, 42 percent of nonsmokers do not drink alcohol, while only 30 percent of smokers are teetotalers.

Smokers are not only more likely to be drinkers, they are also more likely to drink heavily when they do consume alcohol. Sixty-nine percent of smokers drink moderately, while 86 percent of nonsmokers do so.

Less pronounced, though still evident, is the greater tendency among smokers and drinkers to use illegal drugs. Ninety-seven percent of nonsmokers and 98 percent of nondrinkers say they never use illegal drugs, compared with 89 percent of smokers and 93 percent of drinkers.

*The word "recreational" is used in the survey to encourage accurate and truthful responses and in no way should be taken to represent the opinion of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. or PREVENTION Magazine.

HOME SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

The most striking change in home safety has been in the use of smoke detectors. Nearly nine in 10 Americans (88 percent) report having a smoke detector in their homes, up two percentage points since last year, but up an astonishing 21 points since 1983, when just 67 percent of homes had smoke detectors. (See Table 7-1.)

Adults who have a higher socioeconomic status and those under the age of 65 are most likely to report having a smoke detector in their homes. Ninety-four percent of Americans with a college degree, and 93 percent of those whose annual income exceeds $35,000 report having smoke detectors, compared with 83 percent of those without a high school degree, and 84 percent of those with yearly household incomes below $15,000. Similarly, 89 percent of adults under 65 say their home is equipped with a smoke detector, compared with 83 percent of those aged 65 and over.

Although Easterners (91 percent) and Midwesterners (93 percent) are more likely than Westerners (85 percent) and Southerners (85 percent) to say their home is equipped with a smoke detector, differences by region have lessened as the use of smoke detectors has increased.

HOME ACCIDENTS AND FIRES

The proportion of Americans saying they take special steps or precautions to avoid accidents in and around their homes has risen 10 points since 1983, from 72 percent to 82 percent. This year's finding is up four points over 1990, but is just one point higher than the 81 percent finding in 1987. (See Table 7-1.)

In past surveys, lower socioeconomic groups were more likely to try to avoid home accidents. In this year's study, however, differences by education and wealth, along with other demographic measures, were not statistically meaningful.

Over the past year there has been no significant change in the percentage who say that someone in their household smokes in bed. (Smoking in bed is the main cause of domestic fires.) In 1991, eight percent replied positively to this question, compared to nine percent in 1990. While this year's figure of eight percent represents a decrease of only three points since 1983, the change is still notable given such a low starting base. (See Table 7-1.)

Table 7-1

TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF SAFETY AT HOME

Base	1983 Survey 1251 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	1990 Survey 1254 %	1991 Survey 1256 %	Change Since 1983
PRECAUTIONS AT HOME							
Yes, take steps	72	81	82	80	78	82	+10
SMOKE DETECTOR							
Have a smoke detector	67	82	81	85	86	88	+21
SMOKING IN BED							
Yes, someone smokes in bed	11	8	10	10	9	8	-3

AUTO SAFETY

SEAT BELT USE

Seat belt use has reached the highest level ever recorded in the PREVENTION surveys. Sixty-nine percent of Americans say they wear a seat belt all the time when in the front seat of a car, up from 65 percent in 1990. Far more spectacular is the rise of 50 percentage points from the 19 percent recorded in 1983. (See Table 8-1.)

This dramatic change in behavior over the past nine years can be attributed, in large part, to mandatory seat belt laws. In 1985, when 41 percent of Americans said they always wore seat belts, only nine states had seat belt legislation. In 1991, when 69 percent report wearing seat belts all the time, 40 states have mandatory seat belt laws.

The impact of laws is also evident in the difference between people residing in states with seat belt laws, and those living in states without such laws. Seventy-one percent of those

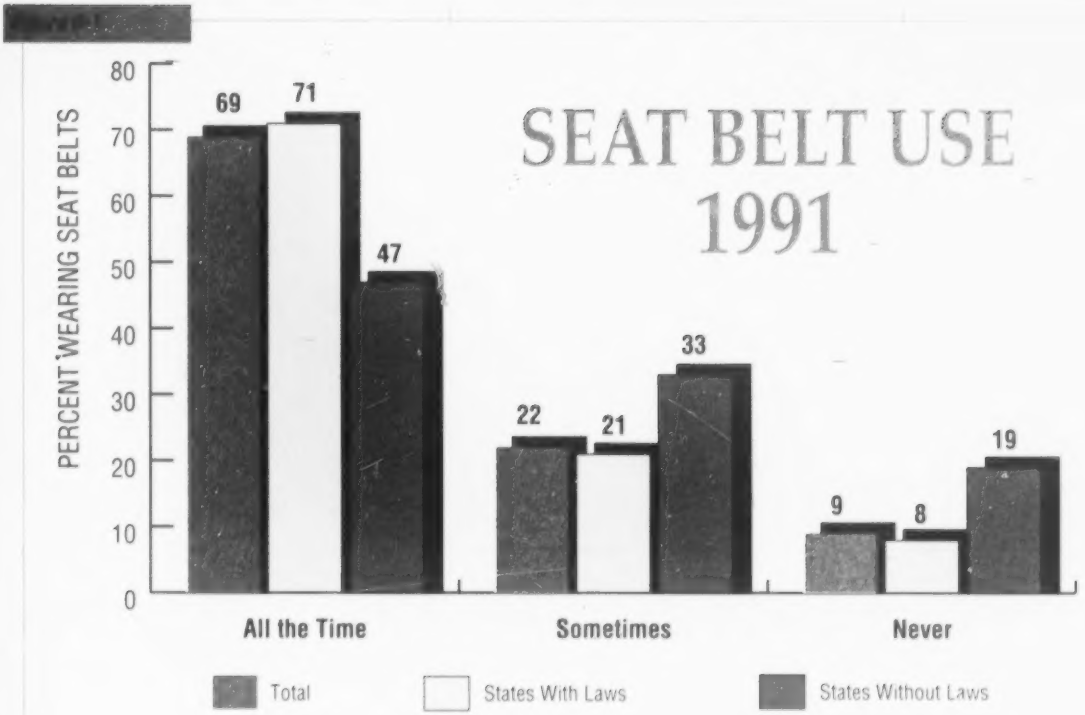
Table 8-1

TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF AUTO SAFETY

Base	1983 Survey 1251 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	1990 Survey 1254 %	1991 Survey 1256 %
WEARING SEAT BELTS							
All the time	19	41	57	60	63	65	69
Sometimes	26	31	27	26	26	23	22
Never	53	28	15	13	11	11	9
Not applicable (vol.)	1	*	*	1	*	*	*
Not sure	*	*	*	–	*	1	–

Base: (Drivers Only)	1983 Survey 1097 %	1985 Survey 1102 %	1987 Survey 1115 %	1988 Survey 1117 %	1989 Survey 1121 %	1990 Survey 1148 %	1991 Survey 1146 %
DRIVING AT OR BELOW SPEED LIMIT							
All the time	56	50	50	51	49	48	48
Sometimes	38	45	45	44	46	45	46
Never	5	5	4	5	5	5	5
Not sure	*	*	–	–	1	1	1
DRIVING AFTER DRINKING							
All the time	5	3	2	3	2	2	2
Sometimes	25	25	23	19	19	18	19
Never	52	59	49	60	56	61	62
Don't drink (vol.)	16	12	25	18	23	18	17
Not sure	2	1	*	*	*	*	*

*Less than 0.5%.



living in states with laws say they always buckle up, compared with only 47 percent of those in states without laws. (See Figure 8-1.)

And the correlation between seat belt usage and seat belt laws has strengthened since 1990, as the gap between seat belt usage in states with and without these laws has widened from 15 percentage points to 24 points.

The groups least likely to wear seat belts when in the front seat of a car continue to be younger, less educated and less affluent Americans. Those living in the East and in rural areas are also less likely to be vigilant in this respect. In contrast, Westerners, women and college graduates are most likely to always buckle up. (See Table 8-2.)

OBEYING THE SPEED LIMIT

SPEED LIMIT 55

While Americans have made sharp gains in seat belt usage, obedience to the speed limit has declined over the same period. In 1991, as in 1990, 48 percent of drivers said they drive within the speed limit all the time, an eight percentage point drop from 1983's finding of 56 percent. (See Table 8-1.)

Age appears to have a far more profound effect on whether a person obeys the speed limit than on whether a person uses a seat belt. While two-thirds of those aged 65 and over (66 percent) report never exceeding the speed limit, only one-third of adults under 30 report equally prudent behavior. In contrast, these two groups differ on seat belt usage by a mere five percentage points (71 percent vs. 66 percent). (See Table 8-2.)

In an opposite pattern to seat belt usage, wealthier and better educated Americans are far more likely than their less fortunate counterparts to violate speed limits. This difference is especially pronounced for household income. Only 37 percent of those earning over $50,000 per year say they never speed, compared with 63 percent of those earning $7,500 or less. Also, Midwesterners are less likely to speed than drivers from the East, South, or West.

DRIVING AFTER DRINKING

Despite slips in observing the speed limit, this year's survey continues to show good news in the area of driving after drinking. Sixty-two percent of Americans say they never drive after drinking, up 10 percentage points since 1983. Nearly one-fifth (19 percent) of drivers say they "sometimes" drive after drinking, and a hard core two percent say they always drive after drinking. An additional 17 percent of drivers say they never drink. (See Table 8-1.)

Among drivers, men, those aged 30 to 49, and people with household incomes of more than $50,000 a year are most likely to drink and drive.

Table 8-2

PEOPLE WHO TAKE AUTO SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

	Base		Wear Seat Belt All the Time In Front Seat of Car	Base: Those Who Drive		Never Exceed Speed Limit*	Never Drive After Drinking or Never Drink**
Total	**1256**	**%**	**69**	**1146**	**%**	**48**	**79**
REGION							
East	303	%	64	265	%	44	78
South	391	%	69	367	%	47	81
Midwest	309	%	69	287	%	57	79
West	253	%	76	227	%	45	78
URBANISM							
Central City	415	%	73	362	%	48	78
Rest of metropolitan area	563	%	72	527	%	46	79
Outside metropolitan area	278	%	58	257	%	52	87
SEX							
Male	644	%	66	608	%	44	71
Female	612	%	72	538	%	52	87
RACE							
White	1071	%	69	994	%	48	78
Black	94	%	67	76	%	51	79
Hispanic	57	%	75	49	%	42	87
AGE							
18-29 years	309	%	66	282	%	33	81
30-39 years	304	%	69	282	%	48	74
40-49 years	220	%	70	210	%	48	74
50-64 years	214	%	72	196	%	56	80
65 and over	201	%	71	169	%	66	91
EDUCATION							
Not high school graduate	147	%	68	111	%	52	82
High school graduate	456	%	62	419	%	54	85
Some college	318	%	70	296	%	45	78
Four-year college graduate	334	%	80	320	%	42	80
HOUSEHOLD INCOME							
$7,500 or less	101	%	65	79	%	63	89
$7,501-$15,000	118	%	68	106	%	51	89
$15,001-$25,000	230	%	69	207	%	54	81
$25,001-$35,000	214	%	70	198	%	45	74
$35,001-$50,000	220	%	70	212	%	46	77
$50,001 and over	262	%	73	258	%	37	71

*Drivers who drive at or below the speed limit all the time.
**Drivers who never drive after drinking, or never drink.

HEALTH INSURANCE

With rapidly rising health care costs, declining access, and insecurity about continued coverage, the issue of health insurance has become increasingly visible in recent years.

Eighty-seven percent of Americans report that they currently have health insurance. Thirteen percent say they do not.

The least advantaged and youngest adults are most likely to be without health insurance. Especially high proportions of Hispanics (41 percent), individuals without a high school degree (22 percent), those with annual household incomes of $7,500 or less (25 percent), and those aged 18 to 29 (18 percent) and 30 to 39 (17 percent) lack health insurance. The Western region of the country—with a large Hispanic population—has 24 percent of adults uninsured, a much higher figure than the other regions of the U.S. (See Table 9-1.)

Unfortunately, Americans who pay the least attention to good health habits are also less likely to be insured. Twenty-one percent of those who practice no more than half of the recommended preventive habits, 19 percent of cigarette smokers, 18 percent of those in only fair or poor health, and 24 percent of those who use illegal drugs have no health insurance.

SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE

A strong majority of adults favor health insurance for all groups in society. Seventy-four percent support the idea of "health insurance for all Americans, funded by tax dollars."

Table 9-1

AMERICANS WHO HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE

	Base		Yes	No
Total	**1256**	**%**	**87**	**13**
REGION				
East	303	%	88	12
South	391	%	88	12
Midwest	309	%	93	7
West	253	%	76	24
URBANISM				
Urban	415	%	84	16
Suburban	563	%	87	13
Rural	278	%	90	10
RACE				
White	1071	%	89	11
Black	94	%	89	11
Hispanic	57	%	59	41
AGE				
18-29 years	309	%	82	18
30-39 years	304	%	83	17
40-49 years	220	%	88	12
50-64 years	214	%	89	11
65 and over	201	%	95	5
EDUCATION				
Not high school graduate	147	%	78	22
High school graduate	456	%	85	15
Some college	318	%	88	12
Four-year college graduate	334	%	94	6
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
$7,500 or less	101	%	75	25
$7,501-$15,000	118	%	81	19
$15,001-$25,000	230	%	80	20
$25,001-$35,000	214	%	89	11
$35,001-$50,000	220	%	92	8
$50,001 and over	262	%	93	6

Table 9-2

SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE FUNDED BY TAX DOLLARS

	Base		Support	Oppose	Not Sure
Total	**1256**	**%**	**74**	**19**	**7**
RACE					
White	1071	%	73	21	6
Black	94	%	82	10	8
Hispanic	57	%	83	17	–
AGE					
18-29 years	309	%	76	21	3
30-39 years	304	%	78	17	5
40-49 years	220	%	72	24	4
50-64 years	214	%	73	18	9
65 and over	201	%	68	18	14
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
$7,500 or less	101	%	71	17	12
$7,501-$15,000	118	%	81	13	6
$15,001-$25,000	230	%	80	14	6
$25,001-$35,000	214	%	76	18	6
$35,001-$50,000	220	%	73	23	4
$50,001 and over	262	%	70	25	5
CIGARETTE SMOKER					
Yes	321	%	81	15	4
No	934	%	72	21	8

Table 9-3

SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE AND SOUGHT PREVENTIVE CARE BY HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Base	Total 1256 %	Have Health Insurance 1112 %	Do Not Have Health Insurance 143 %
UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE FOR ALL AMERICANS			
Support	74	73	81
Oppose	19	20	15
Not sure	7	7	7
SOUGHT PREVENTIVE CARE FROM DOCTOR IN PAST YEAR			
Yes	42	46	23
No	57	54	77
Not sure	*	1	–

*Less than 0.5%

Nineteen percent oppose it, while seven percent are not sure. (See Table 9-2.)

Support for universal coverage is widespread among all groups, but is stronger among those most likely to benefit from it. For example, 81 percent of the uninsured support this measure, compared with 73 percent of insured people. (See Table 9-3.) Higher proportions of Hispanics (83 percent), blacks (82 percent), those with household incomes between $7,501 and $25,000 (80 percent), and adults under age 40 (77 percent) back tax-supported universal coverage. Eighty-one percent of cigarette smokers, with their higher health risks, support insurance for all, compared to 72 percent of nonsmokers.

PREVENTIVE CARE FROM A DOCTOR

For those who have access to medical services, preventive care is a highly recommended way of avoiding health problems before they occur. Forty-two percent of adults say they have visited a doctor for preventive service in the last year, apart from when they were sick. (See Table 9-4.)

Twice as many insured (46 percent) as uninsured (23 percent) Americans report having received preventive care in the past year. (See Table 9-3.) Adults aged 65 and over (58 percent), individuals with better educations (55 percent of college graduates) and greater wealth (54 percent of those with annual household incomes over $50,000) are more likely than others to have visited a doctor for preventive care. A larger proportion of women (50 percent) than of men (34 percent) and of whites (46 percent) than of Hispanics (32 percent) and blacks (28 percent) have done the same.

Predictably, attention to good health habits has an impact on whether a person seeks preventive care from a doctor. A majority (56 percent) of Americans who practice at least 75 percent of the key preventive habits say they sought preventive care from a doctor in the last year, but only 30 percent of those who practice fewer than half did so. Similarly, a higher proportion of adults who are either moderate drinkers or who do not drink at all (44 percent) than of heavy drinkers (27 percent) report having sought preventive care. (See Table 9-4.)

Many forms of health insurance do not provide reimbursement for preventive care, which helps explain why only 46 percent of insured individuals sought such care. Nonetheless, insurance appears to have a significant impact, because only 26 percent of uninsured people sought preventive care.

THE LEAST ADVANTAGED AND YOUNGEST ADULTS ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE.

TABLE B-4

WHETHER AMERICANS SOUGHT PREVENTIVE CARE IN THE PAST YEAR

	Base		Yes	No
Total	**1256**	**%**	**42**	**57**
SEX				
Male	641	%	34	65
Female	612	%	50	50
RACE				
White	1071	%	46	54
Black	94	%	28	71
Hispanic	57	%	32	68
AGE				
18-29 years	309	%	31	69
30-39 years	304	%	37	63
40-49 years	220	%	50	49
50-64 years	214	%	46	52
65 and over	201	%	58	42
EDUCATION				
Not high school graduate	147	%	32	67
High school graduate	456	%	37	63
Some college	318	%	44	56
Four-year college graduate	334	%	55	45
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
$7,500 or less	101	%	29	70
$7,501-$15,000	118	%	46	54
$15,001-$25,000	230	%	39	60
$25,001-$35,000	214	%	44	56
$35,001-$50,000	220	%	38	61
$50,001 and over	262	%	54	46
PREVENTIVE HABITS				
Those who practice 76% to 100%	302	%	56	44
Those who practice 51% to 75%	707	%	41	59
Those who practice 0% to 50%	247	%	30	69
ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION				
Never or moderate	1102	%	44	55
Heavy	145	%	27	72

MEDICINE USE AND LABEL READING

OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS

In this year's survey, for the first time, respondents were asked about their use of medicines, and their understanding of medicine labels.* Eighty-two percent of American adults say that they use over-the-counter medications. Fourteen percent use them often, 35 percent occasionally, and 34 percent rarely. Seventeen percent say they never use them. (See Table 10-1.) Women and people over the age of 50 are most likely to use these medicines often.

Of the people who buy non-prescription medicines, 90 percent say they read the information on the labels. But 12 percent say they don't understand what they read. The people least likely to understand the label include those 65+ (17 percent), those without a high school diploma (27 percent), and those in households with annual income below $35,000 (15 percent). (See Table 10-2.)

When they don't understand the label on an over-the-counter medication, 71 percent of adults ask for help, while 29 percent do not. The primary sources of help are pharmacists (71 percent ask them), family members (15 percent) and doctors (10 percent).

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Eighty-five percent of Americans say they buy prescription drugs—22 percent often, 25 percent occasionally, and 38 percent rarely. Fifteen percent say they never use them. (See Table 10-1.)

Groups most likely to report that they often take prescription drugs include Easterners (25 percent), women (28 percent, compared to 15 percent of men), and those over age 50 (38 percent vs. 14 percent of those under age 50).

Of people who use prescription drugs, 91 percent say they read the labels. One in 10 of these people, however, doesn't understand the label information. Misunderstanding is greatest among Easterners (14 percent), men (12 percent) and those without a high school diploma (16 percent). (See Table 10-2.)

People who don't understand label information on prescription drugs are more likely to ask for help than those who are confused by labels on over-the-counter medicines, by an 83 percent to 71 percent margin. Doctors are the primary source of help for 43 percent of prescription drug users, pharmacists for 38 percent, and other family members for 18 percent.

TABLE 10-1

USE OF OVER-THE-COUNTER AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES

Base: 1256	Over-the-Counter %	Prescription %
Often	14	22
Occasionally	35	25
Rarely	34	38
Never	17	14
Not sure	1	1

NINETY-ONE PERCENT OF ADULTS WHO BUY OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS SAY THEY KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR AS EVIDENCE OF TAMPERING.

TAMPERING

Among adults who buy over-the-counter medications, 91 percent say they know what to look for as evidence of tampering. And 92 percent of this group say that when they buy over-the-counter medicines, they check their purchase for any such evidence.

Men, adults under age 30 or over 65, and those who never finished high school are least likely to know what to look for as evidence of tampering. Of those who know what to look for, Southerners, women, and people over age 65 are most likely to actually check for tampering.

Table 10-2

PEOPLE WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND MEDICINE LABELS

	Base	Don't Understand Over-the-Counter Medicine Label %	Base	Don't Understand Prescription Medicine Label %
Total	**932***	**12**	**976****	**10**
REGION				
East	224	11	241	14
South	299	16	316	9
Midwest	215	8	226	7
West	193	11	194	9
SEX				
Male	412	11	435	12
Female	520	13	541	8
AGE				
18-29 years	237	13	238	10
30-39 years	245	12	242	13
40-49 years	173	8	180	7
50-64 years	147	10	161	9
65 and over	124	17	151	9
EDUCATION				
Not high school graduate	110	27	133	16
High school graduate	338	12	351	11
Some college	243	10	243	7
Four-year college graduate	240	6	247	7

*Read information on labels of over-the-counter medicines.
**Read information on labels of prescription medicines.

USE OF OTHER PEOPLE'S PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Twenty percent of American adults say that in the past five years they have used drugs prescribed for someone else. About one-third of these people say they have done so once, another third say they have done so twice, and the final third report three or more instances of using another person's prescription drugs.

Groups most likely to take someone else's prescription drugs present a rather unusual mix: Southerners (23 percent), Westerners (25 percent), women (22 percent), and those in households with annual incomes above $50,000 (24 percent). People with college degrees or some college experience are more likely to take drugs prescribed for someone else than those with only a high school education or less (24 percent vs. 16 percent), and people under age 50 are more than twice as likely as those over age 50 to do so (26 percent vs. 10 percent).

*This section of the survey was done in consultation with the Council on Family Health.

[illegible] PREVENTIVE HEALTH ITEMS (1983-1991)

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	1990 Survey 1254 %	1991 Survey 1256 %	Percentage Point Change from 1983 to 1991	Percentage Point Change from 1990 to 1991
NONSMOKING AND RESTRICTED USE OF ALCOHOL								
Do not smoke cigarettes	70	70	72	72	74	75	+5	+1
Drink alcohol moderately	54	55	50	51	51	50	-4	-1
(Drink alcohol moderately or do not drink at all)	88	88	86	90	88	88	0	0
EXERCISE AND WEIGHT CONTROL								
Get strenuous exercise three or more days a week	34	31	35	35	34	37	+3	+3
Are within the weight range recommended for their height, build, and sex*	23	21	24	24	22	23	0	+1
Are not overweight*	42	38	40	39	36	37	-5	+1
DIET AND NUTRITION								
Try a lot to get enough vitamins and minerals	63	63	59	58	59	58	-5	-1
Try a lot to eat enough fiber	59	59	60	60	59	56	-3	-3
Try a lot to avoid eating too much fat	55	56	54	58	56	57	+2	+1
Try a lot to avoid eating too much salt or sodium	53	54	54	52	51	48	-5	-3
Try a lot to avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	51	50	49	46	46	43	-8	-3
Try a lot to get enough calcium	50	57	54	55	50	48	-2	-2
Try a lot to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods	42	42	42	50	49	50	+8	+1
CONTROL OF STRESS								
Socialize with friends or relatives once a week or more	84	85	83	85	84	82	-2	-2
Get seven or eight hours sleep most nights	64	64	61	64	61	62	-2	+1
Take specific steps to control or reduce stress	59	69	68	65	65	66	+7	+1
PERIODIC EXAMINATIONS AND TESTS								
Have a blood pressure reading at least once a year	82	87	84	84	85	85	+3	0
Have a dental check-up at least once a year	71	74	75	75	75	77	+6	+2
Women who have a Pap smear test at least every one or two years	75	78	75	76	80	81	+6	+1
Women who examine their breasts at least once each month for signs of cancer	37	48	42	44	47	48	+11	+1
SAFETY PRECAUTIONS								
Say that no one in their home smokes in bed	88	91	92	90	88	87	-1	-1
Say they take specific steps to avoid accidents in and around the home	72	80	81	80	78	82	+10	+4
Say they have a smoke detector in their home	67	76	82	85	86	88	+21	+2
Drivers who say they drive at or below the speed limit all the time	56	50	50	49	48	48	-8	0
Drivers who say they either never drive after drinking or don't drink at all	68	71	74	79	79	79	+11	0
Say they wear seat belts all the time when in the front seat of a car	19	41	57	63	65	69	+50	+4

*Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables were used for the classification. Bases vary slightly across the years: 995 (1983), 1047 (1984), 1061 (1985), 1022 (1986), 1008 (1987), 1031 (1988), 1015 (1989), 1042 (1990), 988 (1991).

PROCEDURES FOR COMPUTING THE PREVENTION INDEX

The Prevention Index is developed from information collected by Louis Harris and Associates in two national surveys:

1. Self-reported practice of preventive health and safety behaviors based on a national probability sample of 1,256 adults in the continental United States 18 years of age and older.

2. Ratings on the relative importance of each of these behaviors for preventing disease and disability in the general population (scale of 1 to 10), as determined by a sample of 103 representative experts in disease prevention and health promotion.

Twenty one of the behaviors measured in the Harris national probability survey of adults were selected for inclusion in the Prevention Index according to the following criteria:

1. A documented relationship between the health behavior and disease or disability as published in the professional literature.

2. Behaviors that are relevant to the entire adult population.

3. Behaviors that can be controlled or affected by individuals. (This meant excluding some important environmental determinants of health such as exposure to air pollution or industrial toxins.)

Currently accepted standards of practice for each behavior were determined by thorough review of the professional literature and consultation with experts. Those standards were used to compute the practice frequencies for each of the Index health behaviors.

For continuous variables (for example, moderate alcohol consumption, exercise or frequency of dental examination), practice was determined by the prevailing consensus in the relevant professional literature and from personal consultation with researchers and spokespersons of professional organizations. For those behaviors with no clear consensus on a minimum compliance level (for example, taking steps to control stress or restricting cholesterol intake), practice was defined in terms of either always engaging in the behavior (taking steps to control stress) or of trying a lot (restricting cholesterol intake). The practice definitions for each health and safety behavior and relevant documentation are presented in the Prevention Index technical report.

The Index is computed on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 representing 100 percent of the adult population of the continental United States age 18 and over practicing all of the 21 key health behaviors. The Index is calculated by:

1. Multiplying the percentage of the adult population who report engaging in each health behavior by its experts' rating;

2. Adding the 21 products together;

3. Adjusting the resulting total to a scale of 100.

A detailed description of the development and computation of the Prevention Index and related analyses is presented in the technical report, "The Prevention Index: A Report Card on the Nation's Health," available from PREVENTION Magazine.

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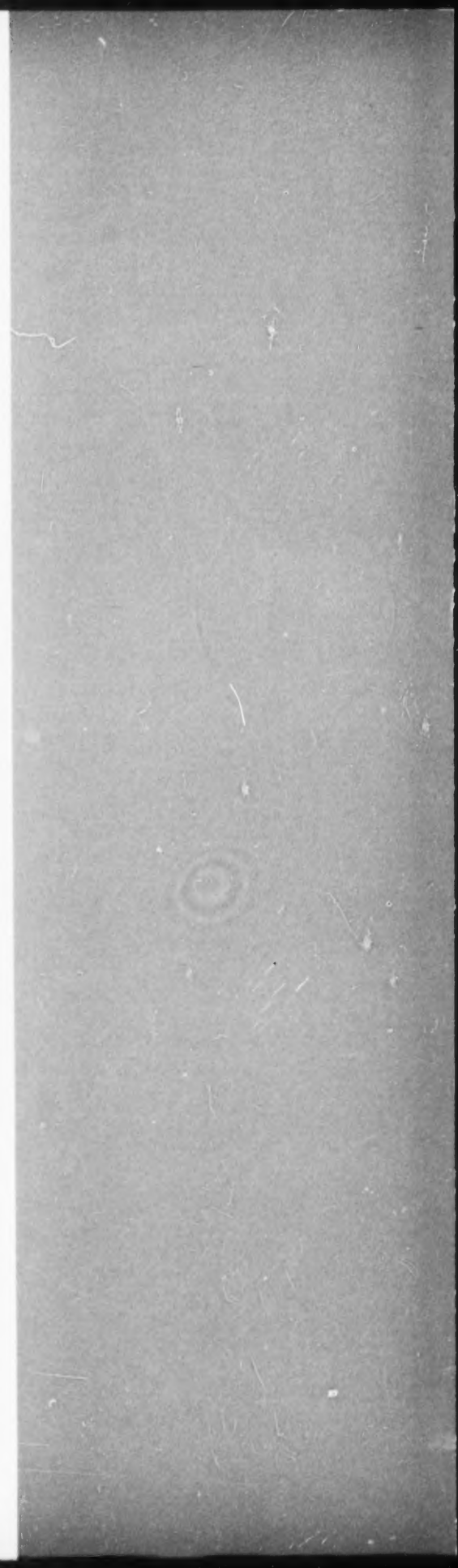
A NOTE ON SURVEY METHODS

The 1991 survey data in this report are based on interviews with 1,256 randomly selected adults across the country, conducted by telephone from November 20, 1991 to December 5, 1991. The overall completion rate for this survey was 58 percent of eligible households reached. The 42 percent non-completion rate includes initial refusals, plus terminations during the course of the interview.

All nine surveys from 1983 to 1991 followed the same procedures in every detail in order to facilitate comparisons.

Harris national public cross sections are weighted to the Census Bureau's latest population parameters on sex, race, age and income. This adjusts these key variables, where necessary, to their actual proportions in the population in order to correct for subgroup variations in telephone penetration and non-response rates.



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PREVENTION